The happiest youth,—viewing his progress through,
What perils past, what crosses to ensue,—
Would shut the book, and sit him down and die.
"Tis not ten years gone,
Since Richard, and Northumberland, great friends,
Did feast together, and in two years after
Were they at wars: It is but eight years, since

My copy wants the whole scene, and therefore these lines.
There is some difficulty in the line—
[16] What perils past, what crosses to ensue—,"
because it seems to make past perils equally terrible with ensuing
crosses. JOHNSON.

This happy youth, who is to foresee the future progress of his life, cannot be supposed, at the time of his happiness, to have gone through many perils. Both the perils and the crosses that the King alludes to were yet to come: and what the youth is to foresee is, the many crosses he would have to contend with, even after he has passed through many perils. *M.* MASON.

In answer to Dr. Johnson's objection it may be observed, that past perils are not described as *equally* terrible with ensuing crosses, but are merely mentioned as an aggravation of the sum ox" human calamity. He who has already gone through some perils, might hope to have his *quietus** and might naturally sink in despondency, on being informed that " bad begins and worse remains behind." Even past perils are painful in retrospect, as a man shrinks at the sight of a precipice from which he once fell.—To one part of Mr. M. Mason's observation it may be replied, that Shakspeare does not say the *happy*, but the *happiest*, youth: that is, *even* the happiest of mortals, *all* of whom are destined to a certain portion of misery.

Though what I have now stated may, I think, fairly be urged in support of what seems to have been Dr. Johnson's sense of this passage, yet I own Mr. M. Mason's interpretation is ex* tremely ingenious, and probably is right. The perils here spoken of may not have been *actually* passed by the peruser of the book of fate, though they have been passed by him in " viewing his progress through :" or, in other words, though the register of

them has been *perused* by him. They may be said to be *past* in one sense only: namely, with respect to those which are to ensue: which are presented to his *eye* subsequently to those which precede. If the spirit and general tendency of the passage, rather than the grammatical expression, be attended to, this may be said to be the most obvious meaning. The construction is, " *What perils* having been^MWf, *what crosses* are *to ensue.*" MALONE,